

September 2018 ACBL Bulletin Notes

Jeff Kroll
Sam Khayatt

Page 18, Cocheme

Written with a humorous bent, this column contains very useful information about starting, navigating and, sometimes, ending a partnership (all references to bullet point lists):

- Page 18, column 1: how to discuss conventions when first starting out.
- Page 18, column 2: displaying the dummy.
- Page 19, column 1: dummy's rights (first two points only).
- Page 20, column 1: how to refine conventions as the partnership matures.
- Page 20, column 2: identifying and addressing behavioral aspects of playing.

Page 33, Jones, column 1, first deal: This is a clear 1D opener even though it has only 10 HCP. Jones points out that it's a six-loser hand. Even without using Losing Trick Count, this should be viewed as an opener. Aces are worth more than four points. The AQ combination is worth more than six points (unless you have reason to believe the king is behind you); your high cards in your long suits; and you have a useful ten.

The Bidding Box (p. 37 – 39)

Note: One of this month's Bidding Box experts is Westside Bridge Academy's **Jimmy Breihan**.

Problem 2

Both pairs are playing 2/1, but even playing Standard American they would have to bid 1N with the void in response to partner's 1S opener. Passing with six HCP is not acceptable and bidding at the two-level shows an opener in 2/1 and ten HCP in Standard American. So 1N it is. East should realize that this is one of those auctions where the 1N bid is nothing more than a waiting bid and doesn't promise a flattish hand.

Problem 4

Breihan's 3D jump shift is forcing to game. Many players will jump-shift in a minor suit to create a game force without length or strength in the minor. It's not until Breihan bids 4D that he shows a real diamond suit.

It's Your Call (p. 40-43)

Problem 1

Most play North's 2H overcall as an opener or near-opener with a good five-card suit. South's hand is too strong to pass opposite what North is showing. Course there is no perfect bid: some support hearts with only two, some bid diamonds (their best suit; bid what you're looking at) and some cue bid 2S, showing a good hand with heart support.

Problem 2

North's 2N call is the Unusual Notrump convention. Based on partnership agreement, it shows either 5+ - 5+ in the minors, or 5+ - 5+ in the two lowest unbid suits. In this case the two lowest unbid suits are the minors, so it's the same in either case.

Problem 3

South has 17 HCP hand, but a complete mismatch for North who is showing 6+ good hearts and 16-18 points. Because of the mismatch, slam is unlikely. Most bid 3N and suggest that if-North can be in hearts opposite a void then North should bid 4H.

Problem 5

South has a choice of poor bids. Bidding a four-card club suit headed by the nine at the two-level is the favorite. Pass is out of the question; the weaker you are the more important it is that you take out your partner's takeout double. 1N would show at least six HCP, so that's too big a stretch. Some bid 1H because it's the cheapest bid they can make, but bidding three-card majors is risky. You would find yourself in a 4H game when partner has 19 HCP and 4 hearts.

Page 44 Harrington: An odd number of missing cards is likely to split as evenly as possible (five cards usually split 3-2), while an even number of missing cards is likely to split slightly unevenly (six cards usually split 4-2, not 3-3). Setting up a dummy's long suit is often the best way to declare a hand. Keep track of the entries needed to set up the long suit and keep track of when defenders follow in that long suit – and when they fail to follow.

Page 48 Helms, column 3, bullet 3: Pass when you have nothing to say, or there is nothing you can say that says what you have. This means there are some auctions where the opponents have bid and you have an opener, but you must remain silent.

Page 49-50 Cohen

Column 1: After 1C-1D in the modern style, opener should bypass his four-card major when he has a flat hand. This is contrary to what most of us were trained to do.

Column 2: In the 1C-1D auction, responder denies a four-card major unless he has enough strength (a good ten points) to show his major on his second bid. Some partnerships routinely skip diamonds holding a four-card major, irrespective of strength.

Column 2: Opener should rarely rebid his five-card club suit. With a minimal opener, 1N is often the correct second bid.

Column 3: 1C-1D | 2M ("M" = major) shows four-cards in that major and roughly 19+ playing points. This is a jump shift and it's forcing to game.

Column 3: 1C-1D | 3C shows 16-18 playing points, six or more clubs and no four card major.

Page 50, column 1: 1C-1D | 3N shows stoppers in the majors and a long strong club suit – typically seven cards to the AKQ.

Page 51, Lawrence: The auction is 2N – 3H! | 3S –3N | 4C/4D/4H. 3H is a transfer to spades; 3N shows exactly five spades. The subsequent four-level bid by opener is a cue bid showing the ace of the suit bid. This cue bid is made when opener’s hand improves based on a fit (spades, in this case). Opener wants to explore slam and is comfortable if the exploration results in a five-level contract.

Page 52, Horton, Postmortem: A 2-2 split happens less than 41% of the time (see Harrington’s column on page 44). Before choosing a line of play that depends on that split, see if there is something better. In this case there is: ruff those two losing spades. Even when the third spade is over-ruffed, the contract is still made when the fourth spade is ruffed.

Page 53, Kantar

Deal 1

When South doesn’t bid hearts on his second bid, it is unlikely that South is 5-5 in the majors (Kantar suggests that 3H would show a second five-card suit, looking a possible 5-4 fit.). Assuming declarer has at most four hearts, partner’s H8 is unlikely to be a singleton but might be the top of a doubleton. East should play the H9 on the first trick, encouraging partner to lead another heart when/if he gets in. East will win the HA on the second heart lead and give West the hoped-for ruff. This is a great hand for West to lead a heart as he has the trump A and can get in before his trump are pulled.

Deal 2

After West leads a spade to East’s K on the opening lead and East returns a spade, West must duck (especially in IMPS when you go all out to beat the contract – even when it means giving up a potential overtrick). If East has an entry (and he does - the DA), when he gets in, he will lead his third spade to West’s Ace and West will cash the remaining spades, setting the contract. If East does not have a third spade, then the spade suit is dead and West was never going to run it anyway.

Page 54 Boehm,

Column 1, third paragraph: Familiar inferences in the bidding and play include the following:

1. Opener has a minimum of about 12 points.
2. Notrump openers generally show a balanced hand.
3. Second-bid suits generally show four cards.
4. An opening lead of an honor generally shows a sequence (leading unsupported honors is generally wrong).

Column 2, second paragraph:

1. The spade honors are probably split since West didn’t lead one. Therefore East has either the SA or SK and can lead a club through declarer if the defense gets in.
2. The D9 probably denies an honor; therefore, East is likely to have DK and DT.

Therefore, assuming East has the DK and DT, play the DQ from dummy. Assuming East plays the DK, win the DA. After finessing the D8, your DJ is now good and can be used to cover one of dummy’s losing clubs. Making four; losing only the CA, SA and SK.

Column 3, hand: Playing IMPS, where you go all out to set the opponents, allowing overtricks is small change compared to setting them. Partner leads the H3 against a 3N contract. Playing standard leads, the H3 is fourth-best, so partner has at least four hearts and may have five, if he also has the H2. Declarer who opened 1N, almost certainly has two or three hearts. Declarer calls for the H5 from dummy. Normally we would keep the HK over the HQ and insert the HT. However, in this case we wonder why declarer didn't go up with the HQ. That would be the normal play if he held Ax or Axx (hoping that the honor from which partner led is the HK). So, we can infer that he doesn't have either of those holdings. If declarer has AJ or AJx, it doesn't matter what we do. But if he holds Jx, we must rise with the HK and return a heart. So up we go with the HK.

Page 55, Cohen: In this nifty 7H contract, we try not to rely on a 3-3 club split as the odds are that it won't work (again, see Harrington's column on page 44). We have all the high trump, so we don't have to worry about an over-ruff. So, we ruff all of dummy's losing spades in declarer's hand and pull the remaining trump with dummy's high trump. A dummy reversal.

Usually we don't ruff in the long hand, but dummy reversals are an exception.

Page 58, Walker

Column 2, first paragraph: Good declarers often make the defense guess early in the play, before they have gathered enough information to make the decision less of a guess.

Column 3, third paragraph: Both when defending and when declaring, the best time to pause and think is at trick one. As defender, the ethical action is to state "no problem" making it clear that you were not thinking about the play on this first trick.